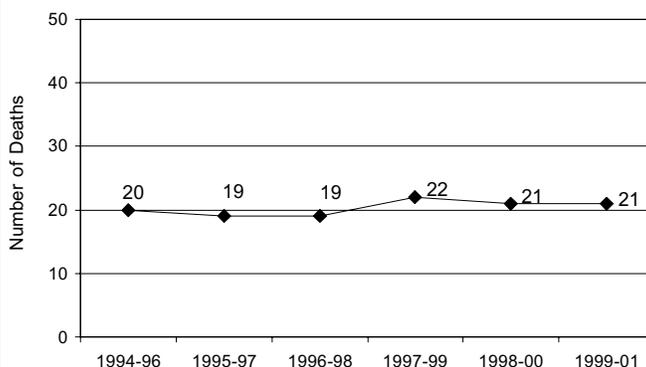


Focus on Substance Abuse

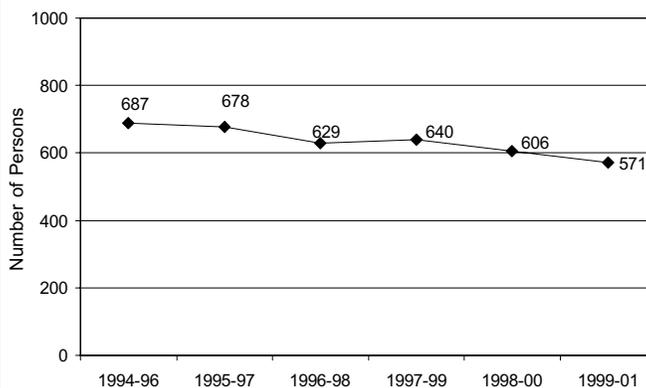
The Community HealthWatch report cards are developed by the Kent County Health Department to report on the status of health priorities being monitored in the Kent County community by Healthy Kent 2010. This report card focuses on substance abuse. As a Healthy Kent priority area, substance abuse is perhaps the most global, and is linked to all other Healthy Kent priority areas: violence, chronic disease, sexually transmitted diseases, and infant health. For this reason, substance abuse prevention and treatment must continue to be a community priority. Toward that end, the Healthy Kent Substance Abuse Implementation Team was a financial supporter of the 'Take Me Home' safe holiday ride program between Christmas and New Years, sponsored a WGVU Family Matters program on addiction and recovery this spring, and continues to promote, coordinate, and support National Alcohol Screening Day each April.

Alcohol-Involved Crash Deaths



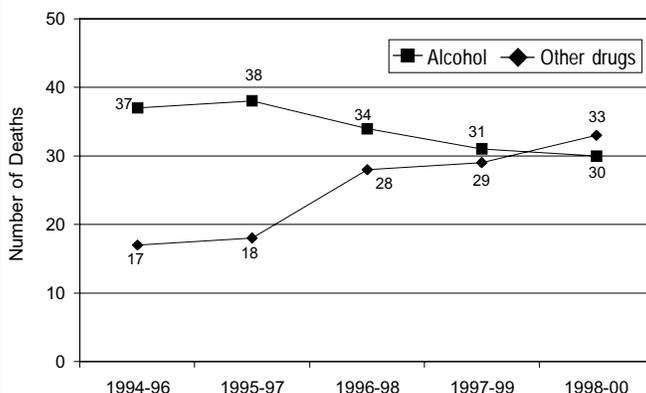
A fatal crash is defined as 'alcohol related' if any driver, pedestrian, or bicyclist was reported as "had been drinking" prior to a crash on the police report. Although since 1990 the population of Kent County has increased by almost 72,000, the three-year average number of **deaths from alcohol-involved crashes** has remained essentially the same. Continuing this somewhat positive trend, the annual number of deaths declined from 19 in 2000 to 17 in 2001.

Alcohol-Involved Injured Persons



The number of persons sustaining **injuries from crashes involving alcohol** has declined at a greater rate than the number of alcohol-involved vehicle crashes. Since 1994, the number of persons injured in crashes involving alcohol has declined 17%. During the same period, however, the average total number of alcohol-involved crashes declined only 5%. This may indicate that the 2000 Michigan mandatory seat belt law and other recent improvements in safety standards may be affecting the declines seen in alcohol-involved crash injuries.

Alcohol and Drug Deaths



The average number of **drug deaths** in Kent County continues to increase, while deaths due to alcohol continue to decline. During the last two years, Kent County Medical Examiner data has shown that the majority of drug deaths have been accidental, and that heroin is the most frequent cause of drug deaths.